

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, 8 and 9 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 9 being independent.

Independent Claims 1 and 9 are submitted to be patentable over the proposed combination of admitted prior art and Masuda '720, as set forth in the Office Action of January 20, 2004.

Claim 1 of Applicant's invention relates to a laminating apparatus comprised of conveying means for conveying a laminating object, drying means for drying the laminating object conveyed by the conveying means, and laminate means for effecting laminate processing on the laminating object dried by the drying means. In addition, control means controls a temperature of the drying means so that the temperature of the drying means is adjusted to a predetermined temperature T1 when the laminating object is being conveyed by the conveying means before the laminating object arrives at the drying means and so that the temperature of the drying means is adjusted to a predetermined temperature T2 greater than the temperature T1 when the laminating object is being dried by the drying means.

Claim 9 relates to an image forming apparatus that includes recording means for recording an image on a recording medium by discharging ink, conveying means for conveying the recording medium on which an image is formed, and drying means for drying the recording medium conveyed by the conveying means. In addition, laminate means effects laminate processing on the dried recording medium, and control means controls a temperature of the drying means so that the temperature of the drying means is adjusted to a predetermined temperature T1 when the laminating object is being conveyed by the conveying means before the recording medium arrives at the drying means, and so that the temperature of the drying means is

adjusted to a predetermined temperature T2 greater than the temperature T1 when the recording medium is being dried by the drying means.

As will be appreciated, Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to set forth that the temperature of the drying means is adjusted to a predetermined temperature T1 when the laminating object is being conveyed by the conveying means. Support for the amendment can be found, for example, beginning on page 23, line 11 of the specification. In accordance with Applicant's claimed invention, an energy efficient apparatus can be provided because the drying means is set to temperature T1 when the conveying means conveys the recording medium.

As discussed in the Amendment After Final Rejection of April 20, 2004, the Masuda patent relates to an automatic film developing machine in which a film is processed through developing tanks 2, 3 and 4 and subsequently through a drying station 5 where heaters 6 evaporate water and dry the film (see Figure 3). Masuda provides for controlling a temperature within the drying section between a standby temperature and an operating temperature. In the disclosed method, temperature differences between the operating temperature and the standby temperature and the developing period is taken into consideration. In contrast to Applicant's claimed invention, however, Masuda is understood to switch from the standby temperature to the operating temperature when the film is fed into the machine (column 6, lines 61-63), and thus when the film is being conveyed. In Applicant's claimed invention, on the other hand, the temperature is controlled to be at predetermined temperature T1 when the laminating object is being conveyed and adjusted to a predetermined temperature T2 when the laminating object is being dried.

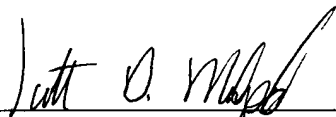
Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that even the combination of Applicant's prior art Figure 9 and Masuda, as proposed in the Office Action of January 20, 2004, still fails to teach or suggest Applicant's claimed invention.

For the above reasons as well as the reasons set forth in the Amendment After Final Rejection, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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